

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MADRID 10447 231444Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----003319 232136Z /41

R 231439Z DEC 77  
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2940  
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T MADRID 10447

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: EG, IS, US, SP  
SUBJECT: BRIEFING FOR HOST GOVERNMENT ON BEGIN VISIT  
TO WASHINGTON AND CAIRO CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 303444

1. USING REFTEL AS BASIS, POLITICAL COUNSELOR DECEMBER 22  
BRIEFED PEDRO LOPEZ AGUIRREBENGOA, DIRECTOR GENERAL  
(EQUIVALENT TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY) OF THE MFA FOR  
CONTINENTAL ASIA AND AFRICA, ON CURRENT MIDDLE EAST  
SITUATION.

2. IN RESPONSE, LOPEZ STATED THAT SPANISH BELIEVE  
COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT IS THE ONLY REAL WAY TO SOLVE  
THE PROBLEM PERMANENTLY AND THAT HE WAS GLAD TO HEAR  
BEGIN WAS THINKING SERIOUSLY IN THOSE TERMS. SEPARATE  
EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT MIGHT RAISE MORE PROBLEMS  
THAN IT WOULD SOLVE, HE ADDED. HOWEVER, SPANISH FEELING  
IS THAT SADAT WOULD BE WILLING TO ACCEPT SEPARATE PEACE  
WITH ISRAEL IF THAT WAS THE BEST HE COULD GET. HE HAS  
GONE SO FAR OUT ON A LIMB, LOPEZ SAID, THAT HE NOW MUST  
PRODUCE SOME RESULTS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN HIS POLITICAL  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MADRID 10447 231444Z

POSITION IN EGYPT. THE KEY TO SADAT'S PROBLEMS, HE  
CONTINUED, ARE ECONOMIC. EGYPT'S EXTERNAL DEBTS ARE  
PILING UP AND EGYPTIAN PEOPLE "WANT A HOT MEAL EVERY DAY".

3. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, LOPEZ WENT OVER HISTORICAL  
REASONS FOR SPANISH NON-RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL. HE ADMITTED  
THAT THIS POLICY WAS AN ANOMALY, BUT SAID GIVEN FACT THAT

IT HAD BEEN IN FORCE SINCE 1948, SOMETHING POSITIVE WOULD HAVE TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE MADRID COULD ALTER THIS LONG-HELD POLICY. AT THIS STAGE ANY MOVE TOWARD ISRAEL WOULD CAUSE GOS TOO MANY DIFFICULTIES WITH THE ARAB WORLD, PARTICULARLY WITH IRAQ AND SYRIA. SPAIN'S ULTIMATE DECISION IN THIS REGARD, HE ASSERTED, WOULD DEPEND TO A GREAT EXTENT ON THE ATTITUDE OF SA00DI ARABIA.

4. LOPEZ STRESSED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT FOLLOWS MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS VERY CAREFULLY AND THAT HE WAS THEREFORE MOST GRATEFUL FOR THE INFORMATION PROVIDED HIM, WHICH WOULD BE CLOSELY HELD.

5. EMBASSY WOULD THEREFORE GREATLY APPRECIATE BEING INCLUDED ON DISTRIBUTION FOR FUTURE BRIEFING CABLES ON THE MIDDLE EAST WHICH WE MIGHT SHARE WITH OUR SPANISH FRIENDS. EATON

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Review Markings:**  
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